

OCT. 24 1962

Approved For Release 2004/01/16 : CIA-RDP75-00149R000500440013-8

TAT

CAPITOL STUFF

On TOUR

By TED LEWIS

Oakland, Calif., Oct. 23.—The CIA is a lush and hush-hush spying and intelligence outfit which has always worried us because we hate Gestapos of any kind. Yet there is no doubt that its findings on any specific international muddle must be respected.

So who dares to fight City Hall on the issue of the Cuba crisis? Certainly no Republican, so late in this off-year election campaign, would be stupid enough to take the President to task. He could, of course, like Richard M. Nixon here yesterday, suggest in a statement supporting Kennedy that he had urged firm action long before the President did, but what political mileage there is in that is questionable.

All we really know is that when Kennedy spoke up on Cuba he knocked all midterm campaigns in this state and all others into a cocked hat. All must be reassessed, and strategy and tactics changed.

Nixon, for example, was planning the windup of his comeback campaign for governor on the basis that Kennedy would be barnstorming California for two days at least in behalf of incumbent Pat Brown.

He had assembled a batch of cute retorts, all based on Brown having to drag national characters in, so desperate was his plight. And even before Kennedy's dramatic Cuban statement, this state was surfeited with Washington figures—at least seven Cabinet or Cabinet level figures had been assigned to help save Brown from Nixon.

But more importantly, the much respected, so-called Field pol which two days ago showed Brown and Nixon almost neck and neck now means nothing. The private organization most sensibly is rushing through the statistical maze of a new poll, based on sentiment after Kennedy's Cuba stand, realizing that all that went before is now down the drain.

It is evident, in talking to political handlers of both Nixon and Brown, that the President on the Cuba issue has given his party nationally a much needed boost which was never transmitted by Kennedy's campaign swings.

His previous set speech about how the country could only be moved forward fast if the voters choose Democrats on Nov. never had any real oomph. He was not influencing the generally apathetic voter and so it behooved him to stay in the White House and stop wasting his time across the country.

In California, It Has Less Impact

Now the whole political climate has shifted. Neither the President nor any ranking Democrat has to say it, but the voters realize that a vote for a Democrat in this election could be considered an expression of confidence in Kennedy's program for meeting the Cuban Communist military threat.

By chance, however, the Cuban development is unlikely to have the election impact in California that it has elsewhere. Nixon, after eight years as Vice President, probably knows more than Kennedy about the ins and outs of the Cuban problem. And fortunately for him, he is on record as urging forceful action. He did just that on Sept. 18, when the extent of Soviet military shipments was first revealed.

On the other hand, Nixon has had to be cautious about stressing foreign policy issues, especially Cuba. Whenever he does, Brown finds an opening to suggest that his opponent is clearly more interested in national problems than those of the State of California. The seed is then planted that Nixon is actually running for governor because he wants to be President.



Gov. Pat Brown
Cuba helps him—or does it?

But Don't Count Nixon Out

But the conclusion is inescapable that Kennedy's action concerning Cuba has helped Brown and hurt Nixon.

There is a general tendency for voters to give the party in power a break. This is particularly so when to do otherwise in a time of global crisis could impair our prestige abroad.

This does not mean that in gubernatorial or even Congressional contests, Democratic candidates get a real big break. But it may help.

On the other hand there is a definite tendency in the balloting to return Congressional incumbents generally to office. It's this simple: When the world is in a mess, an experienced man is best. So it would be our guess that in this state Sen. Thomas Kuchel (R) will be reelected by a sizable majority, despite the Kennedy Administration's fulsome support of his Democratic opponent, Richard Richards, a spell-binding liberal orator.

Whatever happens to Nixon in the tough battle for governor, we can say that despite the Cuban development anybody is a fool to count out the former Vice President.

He Sees It as a Close One

Nixon is waging a most efficient campaign. He is figuring out some way to capitalize on the Cuban crisis. He has always advocated forceful action against Communists anywhere. He obviously can tie in the Red Cuban mess with his own accented charges that incumbent Gov. Brown has been soft on Communists or left wingers in our own midst.

We had a 45-minute chat with Nixon yesterday—before the Cuban crisis erupted—and we came away convinced that while he hoped to be the next governor of California, the vote could be too close for comfort.

But what was more important nationally, we erased for the first time the persisting doubts that he really meant what he said when deciding to try for governor—that without equivocation he would, if elected, serve the full four-year term.

Thus, he could not be drafted in 1964. Nixon didn't put it quite this way. But he felt that Californians wanted a governor to stay on the job the full four years. And if he crossed them up in 1964 to run for President he wouldn't even carry his state.